

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 EUR-25 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 NIC-01

DRC-01 /163 W

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P R 261330Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3326

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N I A L TEL AVIV 4244

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, XF

SUBJECT: RABIN ON DANGER OF RENEWAL OF WAR

1. SUMMARY: PRIMIN RABIN, TWICE THIS WEEK HAS WARNED ISRAELI PUBLIC TO BE PREPARED FOR LIKELIHOOD OF RE-NEWED ARAB AGGRESSION. WAR DANGER THEME, WHICH GOI LEADERS STRESSED IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SECRETARY SIMON, WILL CONTINUE TO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN SPEECHES AND COMMENTARIES AS NEGOTIATING SEASON RESUMES. END SUMMARY.

2. PM RABIN, SPEAKING TO HAIFA UNIVERSITY GRADUATES JULY 24, WARNED THAT ISRAEL WAS " THREATENED AS NEVER BEFORE. WE MUST... KEEP OUR EYES OPEN AND PREPARE OURSELVES. NOBODY WILL STAND UP FOR US EXCEPT OURSELVES. THIS IS A CHALLENGE NOT ONLY FOR THE ARMY." (JERUSALEM POST, JULY 25. OFFICIAL TEXT NOT AVAILABLE.)

3. SPEAKING TO LABOR PARTY LEADERS JULY 25, RABIN REPORTEDLY URGED MAXIMUM ALERTNESS IN VIEW OF LIKELIHOOD OF NEW ARAB
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MILITARY INITIATIVES (JERUSALEM POST JULY 26, OFFICIAL TEXT NOT

AVAILABLE). NOTING UNPRECEDENTED VOLUME AND SPEED OF SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS TO SYRIA AND ASAD'S SWITCH TO SUPPORT FOR HUSSEIN, RABIN EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT POSSIBLE RESURRECTION OF ARAB EASTERN FRONT. WHILE ISRAEL COULD TAKE CREDIT FOR JORDAN STAYING OUT OF OCTOBER WAR, " THE AMERICANS TOLD US THAT JORDAN BELIEVED THE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES THAT ENTERED THE FRAY BENEFITTED TERRITORIALY IN THE DISENGAGEMENT TALKS WHILE IT STAYED OUT AND LOST OUT. THEY SAY THAT JORDAN IS NOW HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ON THIS SCORE." RABIN ADDED THAT ISRAEL MUST DO IT UTMOST TO PREVENT EASTERN FRONT FROM COMING INTO BEING " BY OUR OWN FAULTS."

4. IN RECENT WEEKS, VARIOUS ISRAELI POLITICIANS, JOURNALISTS AND ACADEMICIANS ALSO HAVE DWELT ON DANGER OF RENEWED MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH ARAB STATES. HAARETZ'S RESPECTED MILITARY CORRESPONDENT ZEV SCHIFF FOR INSTANCE, WARNS JULY 26 THAT ISRAEL MUST BE PREPARED FOR PROSPECT OF THREE-FRONT WAR. EVEN SUCH WELL-KNOWN DOVE AND DEAN OF TEL AVIV LAW SCHOOL AMNON RUBINSTEIN, WHO HAS BEEN IN FOREFRONT OF PRESS AND POLITICAL CAMPAIGN TO GET GOI TO ADOPT FLEXIBLE AND IMAGINATIVE NEGOTIATING POLICY, HAS TOLD US THAT HE BELIEVES RENEWED WAR IS QUITE PROBABLE SINCE ARABS HAVE NOT YET ACCEPTED FUNDAMENTAL FACT OF ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE. OTHER OBSERVERS HAVE STRESSED THAT, SHOULD NEGOTIATING EFFORTS COLLAPSE, ARABS WILL BE TEMPTED TO EXERCISE MILITARY OPTION-- PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY NO LONGER ARE TERRIFIED BY ISRAELI MILITARY SUPERIORITY. ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED THAT LAST WAR MAY INDEED HAVE FUELED NEW "MYTH" IN ARAB WORLD THAT ISRAEL CAN BE DEFEATED.

5. COMMENT: PESSIMISTIC TONE OF THESE ANALYSES REFLECTS NOT ONLY DEEPLY INGRAINED SUSPICIONS ABOUT ARAB INTENTIONS, FUELED MY MEDIA ATTENTION TO ALL MILITANT STATEMENTS BY ARAB LEADERS, BUT ALSO FATALISTIC TENDENCY TO VIEW ARAB-ISRAELI DISPUTE AS UNBREAKABLE VICIOUS CIRCLE. ISRAELIS APPEAR INCREASINGLY TO REGARD ACHIEVEMENT OF DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS AS ATTRIBUTABLE TO REQUIREMENT OF BOTH SIDES TO BUY TIME FOR NEXT ROUND RATHER THAN AS INDEX OF NEW ARAB ATTITUDE TOWARD ISRAEL.

6. ISRAELI LEADERSHIP'S PREOCCUPATION WITH ARAB WAR THREAT
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IS MOTIVATED BY COMBINATION OF FACTORS, NOTABLY A) GENUINE CONCERN TO KEEP ISRAELI PUBLIC AWARE OF DANGERS AHEAD WITH FOCUS ON DATES OF RENEWAL OF UNEF AND UNDOF MANDATES: B) TACTICAL OBJECTIVE OF PERSUADING US OF LEGITIMACY OF ISRAEL'S CASE FOR INCREASE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND C) HOPED-FOR SOBERING REACTION IN ARAB WORLD. ISRAELI WAR DANGER TALK OF COURSE COULD PRODUCE PRECISELY OPPOSITE REACTION, TRIGGERING ANOTHER SEQUENCE IN CLOSED CIRCLE OF MUTUAL ARAB-

ISRAELI DISTRUST. TO SOME EXTENT, ISRAELI COMMENTARIES TEND TO
FEED ON THEMSELVES, PARTICULARLY IN NARROW HOTHOUSE
ATMOSPHERE OF ISRAELI POLITICS.

7. WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT SUBJECT OF CONTINUING WAR TALK
IN ISRAEL MIGHT USEFULLY BE RAISED WITH ALLON IN WASHINGTON.
KEATING

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